Please delete page "9/10" and "10/10" of the drawings, also labeled as "Reference Numerals In The Drawings" in its entirety.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Amended) A top sealing plate used for a battery, comprising:

a filter, a cap, and a valve body,

wherein said filter includes a valve hole and upper opening;

said cap has a convex portion, and a flange portion disposed around said convex portion;

an opening end of said upper opening of said filter has a bend portion;

an outer periphery end of said flange portion of said cap and said bend portion include a caulked portion that is caulked and jointed to each other;

said caulked portion is formed by caulking while said outer periphery end of said flange is positioned in said bend portion;

said valve body is disposed to cover said valve hole, in a space formed between said cap and said filter;

said caulked portion includes both contact states of (i) a strong contact portion and (ii) a weak contact portion, between the surface of the outer periphery end of said flange and said bend portion; and

said cap and said filter are electrically connected to each other by the contact with said outer periphery end and said bend portion at said caulked portion.

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6. (Amended) A top sealing plate used for a battery, comprising:

a filter, a cap, and a valve body,

wherein said filter includes a valve hole and upper opening;

A8 said cap has a convex portion, and a flange portion disposed around said convex portion;

an opening end of said upper opening of said filter has a bend portion;

an outer periphery end of said flange portion of said cap and said bend portion include a caulked portion that is caulked and jointed to each other;

said caulked portion is formed by caulking while said outer periphery end is positioned in said bend portion;

said valve body is disposed to cover said valve hole, in a space formed between said cap and said filter;

a surface of said outer periphery end of said flange has a projection;

said outer periphery end including the plurality of projections and said bend portion are caulked;

said strong contact portion is formed with said projection contacted on said bend portion; and

said cap and said filter are electrically connected to each other, by contact between said outer periphery end at the caulked portion and said bend portion.

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12. (Amended) A top sealing plate used for a battery, comprising:

a filter, a cap, and a valve body,

wherein said filter includes a valve hole and upper opening;

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said cap has a convex portion, and a flange portion disposed around said convex portion;

an opening end of said upper opening of said filter has a bend portion;

an outer periphery end of said flange portion of said cap and said bend portion include a caulked portion that is caulked and jointed to each other;

said caulked portion is formed by caulking while said outer periphery end is positioned in said bend portion;

said valve body is disposed to cover said valve hole, in a space formed between said cap and said filter

a surface of said outer periphery end of said flange has a projection;

said outer periphery end including said projection and said bend portion are caulked;

said cap and said filter are electrically connected to each other, by contact between said outer periphery end at said caulked portion and said bend portion;

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the distance from a mating face of said filter and cap to the peak of said projection is greater than the thickness of said flange portion; and

each of the peaks has a stronger contact pressure against said bend portion of said filter as compared with zones other than said peaks.

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14. (Amended) A top sealing plate used for a battery, comprising:

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a filter, a cap, and a valve body,

wherein said filter includes a valve hole and upper opening;

said cap has a convex portion, and a flange portion disposed around said convex portion;

an opening end of said upper opening of said filter has a bend portion;

an outer periphery end of said flange portion of said cap and said bend portion include a caulked portion that is caulked and jointed to each other;

said caulked portion is formed by caulking while said outer periphery end is positioned in said bend portion;

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said valve body is disposed to cover said valve hole, in a space formed between said cap and said filter;

said cap and said filter are electrically connected to each other, by contact between said outer periphery end at said caulked portion and said bend portion;

said caulked portion includes an integral projection such that said outer periphery end and said bend portion are integrally projected;

said integral projection is formed by pressing a protuberant tool from above the bend portion, in a state that said outer periphery end is positioned in said bend portion; and

said integral projection has a stronger contact pressure as compared with zones other than said integral projection.

16. (Amended) A battery, comprising:

a battery case, a positive electrode, a negative electrode, electrolyte, a gasket, and a top sealing plate,

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wherein said positive electrode, said negative electrode, and said electrolyte are disposed in said battery case;

said battery case has an opening;

said top sealing plate is disposed at the opening of said battery case, in a state of being electrically insulated by said gasket so as to close said battery case;

said filter is electrically connected to said positive electrode;

said top sealing plate comprises a filter, cap, and valve body;

said filter has a valve hole and upper opening;

said cap has a convex portion, and a flange portion disposed around said convex portion;

an opening end of said upper opening of said filter has a bend portion;

an outer periphery end of said flange portion of said cap and said bend portion include a caulked portion that is caulked and joined to each other;

said caulked portion is formed by caulking while said outer periphery end is positioned in said bend portion;

said valve body is disposed to cover said valve hole, in a space formed between said cap and said filter;

said caulked portion includes both states of contact of (i) a strong contact portion and (ii) a weak contact portion, between the surface of the outer periphery end of said flange and said bend portion; and

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said cap and said filter are electrically connected to each other, due to contact established between said outer periphery end and said bend portion at said caulked portion.

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23. (Amended) A method of manufacturing a battery, comprising the steps of:

(a) disposing a positive electrode, a negative electrode, and electrolyte in a battery case;

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(b) manufacturing a top sealing plate;

(c) electrically connecting said filter and said positive electrode; and

(d) disposing said top sealing plate at the opening of said battery case via an electrical insulating gasket in order to close the opening,

wherein the step of manufacturing said top sealing plate comprises the steps of:

(1) forming a filter having a valve hole and upper opening;

(2) bending the opening end of the upper opening of said filter, to form a bend portion;

(3) forming a cap having a convex portion and a flange portion disposed around said convex portion;

(4) caulking to join the outer periphery end to said bend portion while the surface and back of the outer periphery end of said flange portion of said cap are positioned in said bend portion, to form a caulked portion; and

(5) disposing a valve body serving to cover the valve hole in a space formed between said cap and said filter, and

wherein the step of forming said caulked portion includes a step of electrically connecting said cap and filter to each other by contacting the outer periphery end at said caulked portion with said bend portion so that said caulked portion includes both states of contact of (i) a strong contact portion and (ii) a weak contact portion, between the surface of the outer periphery end of said flange and said bend portion.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Kathleen Libby